

Message Text

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 6884

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO UR

SUBJ: JORDAN AIR DEFENSE-SHAH-RIFAI MEETING

REF: A. AMMAN 3482, B. AMMAN 3552

1. DURING AUDIENCE AFTERNOON JULY 6, SHAH TOLD ME OF HIS MEETING TWO DAYS EARLIER WITH RIFAI. MEETING TOOK PLACE BEFORE RECEIPT OF REF B.

2. SHAH SAID MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN RIFAI'S DESCRIPTION OF SOVIET AIR DEFENSE OFFER WAS THAT SOVIETS WERE DEMANDING CASH PAYMENT FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE. AS SAUDI PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE \$500 MILLION FOR JORDANIAN AIR DEFENSE WAS VALID ONLY FOR WESTERN SYSTEMS, SHAH COMMENTED THAT SOVIET PROPOSAL HAS ALMOST THE SAME EFFECT AS IF IT HAD BEEN DISIGNED "TO GIVE HUSSEIN AN EXCUSE TO DISENGAGE." SOVIETS HAD PLEADED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES IN STIPULATING A CASH SALE.

3. RIFAI MADE A STRONG PLEA TO SHAH TO EFFECT THAT JORDAN WOULD BE IN TERRIBLE CONDITION IF IT DID NOT ACQUIRE ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE. SHAH ARGUED STRENUOUSLY AGAINST A DEAL WITH SOVIETS AS HE HAD DONE PREVIOUSLY THROUGH HIS AMB TO AMMAN. IF JORDAN ACQUIRED SOVIET SYSTEM, SHAH ASKED RIFAI, "HOW WILL YOU EAT?". SAUDIS AND KUWAIT WOULD TERMINATE THEIR SUBSIDIES TO

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JORDAN AND COUNTRY WOULD BE ISOLATED FROM ITS IMPORTANT

FRIENDS IN REGION. SHAH SAID HE HOPED THAT SAUDIA ARABIA AND KUWAIT WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR JORDAN AS LONG AS NEEDED.

4. CONTRARY TO FEARS OF IRANIAN AMB IN AMMAN, SHAH WAS VERY RELAXED AS TO PROTOCOL ASPECTS OF HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO RAYADH AT SAME TIME RIFAI WAS IN TEHRAN. SHAH CONFIRMED THAT THERE WAS NO AMBIGUITY IN SAUDI'S OFFER OF \$500 MILLION FOR WESTERN AIR DEFENSE FOR JORDAN. HE SAID HE WOULD NOW AWAIT REPORT OF WHAT HUSSEIN HAD BEEN ABLE TO WORK OUT WITH SAG.

5. REGARDING EXACTLY WHAT SOVIETS OFFERED JORDANIANS, SHAH SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IN ADDITION TO SA-7S AND SHILKAS, RUSSIANS OFFERED A NEW 4-MISSILE UNIT WHICH HE IDENTIFIED AS "QUADRAT." SHAH ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS QUITE SURE COST OF SOVIET SYSTEM WAS \$550 MILLION. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE COULD BE SOME CONFUSION IN TERMINOLOGY IN TRANSLATION FROM RUSSIAN TO ARABIC TO ENGLISH.

HELMS

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